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June 1990

A Strategic Plan for the 90's:

Working Together for Rural America

United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Washington Office | 12th & Independence SW
P.O. Box 96090
Washington, DC 20090-6090

Reply to: 3610 Date: June 28, 1990

Subject: Rural Development Strategic Plan

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, and WO Staff

Today, rural America needs our help. The Forest Service (FS) clearly has a role and the responsibility to help rural America address rural development concerns and remain a vital contributor to our Nation's competitiveness.

I want everyone to understand that rural development has a high priority in the FS and is a highly relevant part of our mission. Our resources contribute to rural America in a variety of ways, as seen by reviewing the examples in this plan. Although rural development is not altogether a new task, it is important that you fully understand our new policy. The six goals and supporting strategies presented in this plan will serve to guide you in implementing Region, Station, and Forest efforts.

In 1989, the Secretary of Agriculture asked an interagency Rural Revitalization Task Force to conduct a forthright review of the Department's approach to rural development and report its findings. In the report, "Hard Look at USDA's Rural Development Programs," the Department challenges each agency to improve its own effectiveness and the success of its programs in coordination with the Department's long-term goals. As a result, I established a National Rural Development Task Force within the FS to assess our capability and develop a plan for guiding us in the future with a unified approach to rural development.

The National Rural Development Task Force completed its review, developed a strategic plan for the FS, and revised our rural development policy to clarify our committment to rural America. The plan recommends opportunities for change which enhance our role in rural development and provide flexibility in implementing rural development activities. Careful attention has been given to fulfilling our agency mission and my working agenda for the FS, addressing the Secretary's concerns, and supporting a new Presidential initiative on rural economic development.

Now it is incumbent upon you to implement our policy and use this plan in carrying out rural development activities. By working together, we can help rural America.

F. Dale Robertson

F. DALE ROBERTSON
Chief

A Strategic Plan for the 90's:

Working Together for Rural America

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

President George Bush, Secretary of Agriculture Clayton Yeutter, and Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson all share a similar concern about rural America. It needs help. The USDA Forest Service (FS) can meet some of this need through the use of its resources already available throughout much of rural America.

In December 1989, the Chief established a National Rural Development Task Force to review the FS's rural development efforts. He asked for a unified plan that clarifies our commitment and strengthens our contribution to rural America. To ensure communication across the FS and to provide guidance to the Task Force, the Chief also formed a Rural Development Steering Committee composed of the Associate Deputy Chiefs.

The FS effort is not being done alone. Other major efforts are underway by the Department and the White House. All are focused on improving the effectiveness of using existing resources—human, natural, technical, and financial—to assist in planning and implementing rural development activities. Emphasis is being given to improving coordination and developing partnerships with others in the public and private sectors.

In forming the Task Force, the Chief communicated his six-point working agenda for the FS in the 1990's and challenged the Task Force to go beyond traditional ways in working with rural communities. This entails understanding the community's needs—which are diverse—so we can help change current conditions. By being flexible in using FS resources, the agency will be more responsive; and by working in partnership with others committed to rural development, better long–term solutions will be found.

In general, however, FS people currently do not have a common understanding of their roles and responsibilities in rural development. They also have not been recognized adequately for their involvement. And barriers to their involvement in rural development activities need to be eliminated.

The FS has developed a unified plan for helping rural America. This plan is an "umbrella" strategy that focuses our efforts on greater internal coordination, greater cooperation with other public and private entities, and greater emphasis on being part of community-based activities. We can, and should, expect these activities to include a broad array of concerns—all of which affect the competitiveness and strength of rural America.

The plan includes a revised policy on rural development for the FS that fits well within the agency's mission of "caring for the land and serving people." The policy includes six opportunities for change, which are presented as goals in the plan. Each goal is explained in an issue statement, and ways to achieve each goal are listed.

Implementing the plan requires a combination of efforts involving employees at all levels of the FS, with leadership being provided by the Regional Foresters, Station Directors, and the Area Director. National consistency and assistance will be provided by a team of Washington Office coordinators within the various staff units working in conjunction with the Steering Committee. By working together, the FS can help rural America.

PURPOSE

This plan communicates a revised FS policy on rural development to all employees. It includes goals and strategies that support the USDA rural development mission, and strengthens our contribution through partnerships and a unified FS approach.

BACKGROUND

The FS has a great opportunity to help rural America, which today needs our help. People are continuing to leave rural America to live in cities that are already crowded. The rate of growth in rural jobs has slowed, and unemployment is high. In some areas, stress is taking its toll—breaking family and community ties.

Only a fully diversified economy will create new life in rural communities throughout America. Although farming and farm-related jobs remain very important, they employ few people.

Non-farm jobs are essential to change this direction. This calls for increased employment opportunities involving both land and people. Today's Federal rural development efforts reach a broad part of rural America, but improved coordination is needed between agencies and the private sector.

The FS is in a good position to help "care for the land and serve people." We have a broad range of resources in place that touch rural communities all across the country. But too often we think so much in functional and programmatic ways that we overlook opportunities that are beyond our usual boundaries to help rural America.

THE CHIEF'S PERSPECTIVE

The Chief formed a National Rural Development Task Force within the FS to critique agency efforts affecting rural people and communities. He also formed a Steering Committee composed of the Associate Deputy Chiefs to ensure communication across the entire agency. The members of the Task Force and the Steering Committee are listed in the Acknowledgements.

He personally challenged the Task Force to go beyond traditional ways of working with rural communities, and communicated his six-point working agenda for the FS. Many of the most economically depressed communities are located in heavily forested areas. Since the FS also is located in many of these areas, he urged employees to get involved and work in partnership with others at all levels. By understanding their situation, we can more effectively help them solve their problems. In doing so, we must be creative in implementing the multiple-use concept in a way that im-

Chief's Six-Point Working Agenda for the Forest Service

The Chief has emphasized six points that are crucial to the Forest Service's success in carrying out its mission through conservation leadership in the 1990's.

1: Partnerships
2: Customer Satisfaction
3: Building Strong Grassroots Support
4: Rounding Out Forest Service Programs
5: Workforce Diversity
6: Innovative/Creative, People-Oriented Forest Service Culture

proves the balance among natural resources and demonstrates greater environmental sensitivity. Flexibility in using our agency's resources—human, natural, technical, and financial—is key to improving current conditions.

By moving forward with this plan, the FS is supporting the efforts of the Department (see Appendices A and B) and the President (see Appendix C). Secretary Yeutter has challenged each Departmental agency to improve its own effectiveness in rural development. Overall, the Department seeks to improve USDA's contribution to a stronger rural economy by:

- clarifying its commitment to rural development;
- strengthening the coordination among its rural programs;
- enhancing its capacity for strategic action on rural issues;
- improving its ability to implement rural programs.

The need to help rural America is so important that the President initiated a Cabinet–level Working Group on Rural Development to explore five areas of concern: education and training, economic development, infrastructure, housing, and health care. The Working Group determined that "rural development is, above all else, an economic issue" and that "Federal rural development efforts must be better coordinated to deal with globalization, local diversification, as well as the limitations in rural education, housing, capital formation and infrastructure." Secretary Yeutter, chairperson of the Working Group, now is responsible for implementing a Presidential initiative on rural economic development, which is summarized in Appendix C.

THE STATES' ROLE

The Nation's governors recognize the important role the States have in rural development. The National Governors' Association (NGA) Task Force on Rural Development recommended that Federal spending be adjusted to encourage adaptation to changing economic conditions in rural America. The NGA asked the President to work with Congress, the States, and local governments to build a new Federal-State-local alliance that consolidates and increases the flexibility of programs that serve rural America; and to recognize that Federal agencies should be more sensitive to the impact of their policies on rural America.

Each State provides a unique combination of assistance to respond to the specific needs of its rural citizens. The assistance generally includes capital, information, infrastructure, marketing, technology, and workforce-oriented programs. It is provided through a variety of agencies including departments of commerce, agriculture, natural resources, transportation, economic development, community affairs, and others. Also, many state-level organizations and councils exist for planning purposes and for providing particular types of assistance to their clients.

State Foresters are one of the FS's key partners. Their rural development objectives, as identified in their national resolution (see Appendix D), are important to the success of our efforts.

TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Tribal governments have considerable powers that frequently are separate and equal to those of State and local governments, and they are assuming more and more responsibility for their destiny. It is the policy of the Federal government to support the cultural and political integrity of American Indians and Alaska Natives. As such, the United States is com-

mitted to supporting and assisting them in the development of strong, stable tribal governments capable of administering programs and developing the economies of their respective communities. Self-determination on the part of tribes is underway, and the FS will seek opportunities to work with them in government-to-government ways.

CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST

Increasingly, Congress is focusing attention on providing aid to rural areas facing economic distress. The rural economy has not kept pace with national economic growth, yet rural people, land, and natural resource industries are important to the Nation's economic competitiveness. Current legislative proposals focus on several aspects of rural development considered to be critical at this time: the financial problems of small businesses, telecommunications and other rural infrastructure needs, rural business and leadership training, and local planning efforts.

Since rural areas are especially important for their natural resources, special attention is being given to diversifying the economic base of natural resource-dependent communities. During the last few years, the FS has been appropriated funds to help these types of communities assess their options for diversifying and to share the cost of projects that encourage expanding the use of forest resources. Now, additional emphasis is on using the resources available within the FS and other USDA agencies to assist in local planning and training efforts.

POLICY ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development fits well within the FS's mission of "caring for the land and serving people." But since rural development is a dynamic process, our policy needed a new focus. It now includes the opportunities for change that are deemed critical to the success of our overall effort of "working together for rural America." Emphasis is on having a unified FS approach to rural development.

The Task Force developed the following definition of rural development to focus FS efforts:

> *"Rural development" is the management of human, natural, technical, and financial resources needed to improve living conditions, provide employment opportunities, enrich the cultural life, and enhance the environment of rural America. In the FS, rural development is accomplished through partnerships.*

The policy is:

> ***The Forest Service will provide leadership in working with rural people and communities on developing natural resource-based opportunities and enterprises that contribute to the economic and social vitality of rural communities. The Forest Service can make lasting improvements in rural America by helping people solve their local problems in ways that enhance the quality of the environment in accordance with our existing authorities.***

There are many opportunities for the Forest Service to provide leadership in helping rural America. Our goals are to:

- *Communicate to all Forest Service employees and the public that rural development is part of the agency's mission since rural resources— land and people—are key to local and national development.*
- *Include rural development considerations in agency resource decisions to assist rural communities and the Nation in achieving long-term economic development and improved quality of life.*
- *Actively participate in planning and implementing community-based rural development activities.*
- *Understand and integrate the needs of culturally, geographically, and economically diverse communities in Forest Service activities.*
- *Strengthen Forest Service participation in cooperative USDA efforts at the local level.*
- *Develop and provide timely and current research and resource information on rural development opportunities.*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

GOAL 1 – Communicate to all Forest Service employees and the public that rural development is part of the agency's mission since rural resources—land and people—are key to local and national development.

The opportunities for change are presented as rural development goals for the FS.

GOAL 1 – Communicate to all FS employees and the public that rural development is part of the agency's mission since rural resources—land and people—are key to local and national development.

Issue

The FS traditionally has contributed to the rural development mission of the Department, as seen in Appendix E. However, some of the benefits of our current activities are not recognized, and actions taken by employees are questioned due to a lack of understanding of what rural development is and how it can be accomplished most effectively.

Many other barriers stand in the way of greater contributions. FS employees lack a collective understanding of our rural development roles and responsibilities at all levels. And some feel constrained by the current direction of existing programs. This includes funding. Secondly, employees have not been recognized adequately for their involvement.

FS employees must recognize they can and should take an active role in advancing the economic and social vitality of the rural communities in which they live and work. There are many opportunities for us to work on issues and problems facing rural people, businesses, and communities. The perception among employees about the scope of our involvement in rural development and the ways to participate must be expanded. Likewise, we need to better communicate our capabilities to those we want to help.

In the future, FS employees should increase their knowledge and awareness of available resources and innovative ways to use our resources in assisting rural America. They should exercise more leadership in carrying out rural development activities, develop more effective partnerships with other public and private entities, and recognize the many important contributions made by fellow employees in improving the vitality of rural America.

Strategies to achieve goal:

- Promote and communicate the FS policy, roles and responsibilities in rural development throughout the agency.
- Recognize and coordinate existing initiatives, programs and expertise that contribute to rural development.
- Encourage all employees to become involved in rural development in their areas.
- Recognize successful accomplishments, actions and partnerships with awards and press releases.

GOAL 2 – Include rural development considerations in agency resource decisions to assist rural communities and the Nation achieve long-term economic development and improved quality of life.

GOAL 2 – Include rural development considerations in agency resource decisions to assist rural communities and the Nation achieve long-term economic development and improved quality of life.

Issue

Historically, FS activities have provided economic assistance to rural communities through resource availability, information about resource uses, and job opportunities. Although many of the agency's annual and long-term planning documents do not specifically identify activities as being related to rural development, well-established programs are available to help improve communities. Some help develop facilities while others focus on the capacity of people and governments, the creation of jobs, the enhancement of the environment, and the provision of information. During the recent revision of the Resources Planning Act Program, the agency's role in rural development was given increased visibility.

The FS manages natural and human resources and conducts resource-related research that can be key ingredients to rural economic development. With the recent completion of many Forest Land Management Plans and the shift in resource outputs, some communities are experiencing changes in their economic base. These changes reaffirm the need to assist in diversifying rural economies. The FS role has been to contribute to these local economies where possible and avoid radical changes in resource management that may adversely affect economic stability. During the development of Regional guides and Forest plans, as well as implementation and monitoring, the FS must consider rural development opportunities including partnerships and research. We also must provide leadership in working with the States as they update their statewide resource and development plans.

Given the importance the President, Secretary, and Chief are putting on developing the capacity of rural citizens to be more productive workers and effective leaders, the agency's human resource programs are crucial to a balanced rural development effort. These programs are designed to provide human and natural resource benefits through administering programs in work, training, and education for the youth, the unemployed, the under-employed, the elderly, and others with special needs.

Strategies to achieve goal:

- Re-evaluate human, natural, technical, and financial resources to determine how they can be better used or redirected for rural development purposes.
- Include rural development considerations in FS planning, monitoring, evaluation, and other decision-making processes.
- Review laws, contractual authorities, regulations, and policies to clarify opportunities and eliminate barriers that impede local managers from carrying out rural development programs.
- Include rural development items in all FS annual budgeting processes to facilitate activities by all units.
- Expand partnerships with State Foresters, Federally recognized tribal governments, and others by jointly identifying and developing natural resource opportunities in rural development.

GOAL 3 – Actively participate in planning and implementing community-based rural development activities.

GOAL 3 – Actively participate in planning and implementing community-based rural development activities.

Issue

In the past, most rural development programs have emphasized agency objectives identified at the national or regional levels. State, tribal, and local perspectives and priorities, although not ignored, typically have not been the primary focus or considered as a base from which planning should begin. Ultimately, little focus has been placed on the problems in rural America.

The success of future rural development efforts will depend greatly upon the degree to which they are initiated, planned, and implemented by local citizens and groups. By reaching out and working with others from a broad range of interests and concerns, FS employees will understand more readily the contribution we can make and identify the resources needed by communities. A comprehensive, long-term strategy that encourages interaction with a variety of agencies and organizations and focuses on the importance of participation in community problem-solving efforts is essential.

Funding for rural development at all levels—and for all units—is an important incentive for encouraging participation and commitment. Current funding allows the FS to participate in a variety of ways that can benefit rural development, but resources frequently are not used for rural development purposes. This includes providing leadership in planning efforts, funding specialists in rural development, and implementing specific projects. Funding needs should be considered in all budget planning activities.

Given the broad focus of rural development, as well as the emphasis placed on active participation and locally desirable results, many employees may feel they lack the skills, knowledge, and confidence to be successful in community-based activities. And they may not understand the contribution the FS can make in supporting efforts underway by others. These should be considered in identifying needed employee training and developmental programs.

Strategies to achieve goal:

- Make available FS technical assistance and research expertise at the local level.
- Improve the FS's flexibility to use existing funds to help finance local rural development projects.
- Work with other Federal, State, tribal, and local entities to strengthen existing partnerships and to form new alliances for developing common goals and facilitating rural development activities.
- Involve agencies and organizations not traditionally reached by the FS in order to broaden our perspective on issues and problems confronting rural communities.
- Provide training to improve FS ability to participate at the local level by implementing programs, building partnerships, and enhancing grassroots support.

GOAL 4 – Understand and integrate the needs of culturally, geographically, and economically diverse communities in Forest Service activities.

GOAL 4 – Understand and integrate the needs of culturally, geographically, and economically diverse communities in FS activities.

Issue

The needs of rural communities are diverse and often unique, reflecting the history, culture, and traditions of the residents; their goals for the future; and the immediate or pending impacts of influence coming from outside the community. In the Southwest, for example, Indian, Spanish, and Anglo-American cultures are all deeply embedded in the socio-economic fabric of rural communities.

Rural communities also are diverse in terms of their current economic base and their opportunities for meaningful future development because of the diversity of available human, natural, technical, and financial resources. In some cases, the resources on which the community was founded are no longer available or markets for them have changed. This is especially true on public lands, or in public waterways, where natural resources have been withdrawn from use or their use has been restricted in favor of some larger identified public benefit. In response, the nature of available human and financial resources also may have changed.

It is important to ensure that economic development activities benefit both the long-time and newer residents, and in a way that does not impinge against the cultural beliefs and traditions in which the local community was founded. Because of local diversity, development needs cannot be defined in terms of blanket program objectives. To achieve needed results, flexibility and freedom to pursue new paths must be fostered by recruiting employees from diverse backgrounds, providing additional training and intercultural exchanges for current employees, and assisting in the training of rural people who ultimately become community leaders.

Strategies to achieve goal:

- Help develop educational programs and curricula to improve the understanding of natural resource development in relation to social/cultural/economic issues.
- Recruit and develop through in-service training employees with a better understanding of social/cultural/economic issues in rural development.
- Work with communities to identify needs and conduct research related to diversification and the enhancement of local economies.
- Develop and/or provide national reference documents that identify and explain significant authorities, legislation, and agreements about specific ethnic groups with which the FS relates.
- Link Native American program activities with rural development initiatives.

GOAL 5 – Strengthen Forest Service participation in cooperative USDA efforts at the local level.

GOAL 5 – Strengthen Forest Service participation in cooperative USDA efforts at the local level.

Issue

Rural programs administered by USDA agencies are invested with multiple goals from individual agency perspectives. The result is often an emphasis on agency priorities rather than the USDA mission or contribution that can be made by all the agencies working together within states and localities.

USDA's network of agencies, with personnel located in rural communities, gives the Department a unique presence in rural America. There are recognized opportunities, however, to strengthen coordination between the different agencies and rural development efforts. A shared comprehensive vision of the Department's rural development mission (see Appendix A) and the FS's policy regarding rural development could be a catalyst leading to synergistic results. Through coordination, USDA's resources will be used more effectively and our actions will lead to better, more long-term improvements.

A traditional value of the FS has been the strength of the Ranger Districts and other field units in rural America. The people at these units, in cooperation with other USDA and resource-oriented agencies, should be encouraged to embrace the values, character, and people of their communities. Without these close ties, the FS will lose touch with rural America.

Existing opportunities must be utilized effectively and new ones actively pursued. USDA's legal authority to assist rural areas and statutory responsibility to coordinate rural development activities within the Federal government gives USDA agencies the opportunity to promote increased communication and coordination across political jurisdictions and between rural and urban areas, especially at the interface points. This is needed to achieve desired and sustainable results.

Strategies to achieve goal:

- Develop grassroots-level thinking, awareness, and support through cooperative leadership with others in USDA.
- Provide personal leadership and assistance to local and State Food and Agriculture Councils.
- Be a catalyst for action by promoting communication among USDA's agencies and the coordination of available resources to make improvements.
- Counsel and encourage employees to use their individual skills and abilities in advancing the FS's rural development efforts beyond our traditional agency boundaries.

GOAL 6 – Develop and provide timely and current research and resource information on rural development opportunities.

GOAL 6 – Develop and provide timely and current research and resource information on rural development opportunities.

Issue

Rural development information and communication efforts are fragmented and dispersed throughout USDA and the Federal government. Mechanisms to communicate rural development issues, activities, and new information often are narrowly focused. Currently, information development and delivery is accomplished through various means: communication networks, newsletters, electronic databases and bulletin boards, research projects and reports, technology transfer efforts, training sessions, and educational programs provided by agencies such as the Extension Service. More timely and current communication about available technical information, human resources, financial assistance, and natural resources need to flow between the different levels and units of the FS, agencies of the Department, and our many partners.

Once specific rural development needs and opportunities are known, the FS should develop new information and update the resource data needed to implement rural development projects. Emphasis should be given to identifying the data gaps and communicating the need for missing information to researchers so voids can be filled.

Priority also must be placed on developing and sharing "ideas that work." Alternative strategies can be more readily explored and efforts more expeditiously accomplished if information about successes is available for use in rural development efforts.

Strategies to achieve goal:

- On a continual basis, provide information to the field about national rural development decisions and events.
- Take a lead in providing information about diversifying and developing rural natural resource-based economies in conjunction with State Foresters, rural development councils, and other appropriate mechanisms.
- Participate in the further development of USDA's Rural Information Center, which serves as the national center for rural development information and referrals.
- Conduct research with partners to provide timely information regarding the economic potential of alternative rural activities.
- Train employees to better utilize resource information in working on rural development.
- Using computers and other means, identify and share successful case studies that demonstrate progress through cooperative efforts.
- Streamline and expedite the development and release of resource data needed by partners and the FS in implementing rural development projects.

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

This plan provides national direction by focusing implementation of the FS's rural development policy on six goals. A combination of actions by employees at all levels of the agency will be necessary for these goals to be met.

Implementation will be led primarily by the Region, Station, and Forest units. The national strategy serves as an "umbrella" for focusing their rural development efforts. The Regional Foresters, Station Directors, and the Area Director will be responsible for implementing rural development in their units by incorporating rural development in their annual budget and work plans. Coordinated approaches within and between the units is strongly encouraged. Examples of rural development activities are provided in Appendix E.

When national consistency is desired, or when national level assistance is needed, activities will be coordinated by the Washington Office (WO) of the FS. The following activities require WO assistance led by Cooperative Forestry (CF), and can be used to guide Region, Station, and Forest efforts. CF will coordinate with other staff units within the WO, and distribute information through the Public Affairs Office (PAO) and other networks. National implementation plans will be developed for each activity listed below and involve the Steering Committee for internal coordination.

Activity	Responsibility
Implement a national communications plan.	Team of WO coordinators, including PAO, led by CF during FY 1990
Issue the policy and update Chapter 3610 of the Forest Service Manual.	Immediately by WO-CF
Present a national FS award to recognize outstanding rural development efforts.	Annually by team of WO coordinators led by CF
Coordinate FS rural development activities with other Federal agencies and organizations at the national level.	Continuously by team of WO coordinators led by CF
Review the FS's legal authorities and regulations affecting participation in rural development.	WO staff in CF, F&PS, P&P, LMP, and PA during FY 1990 – 91
Provide all units with budget advice and funding for rural development.	Annually by PD&B

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Continued

Activity	Responsibility
Provide program direction to the Regions, Stations and Area.	Annually by PD&B involving all WO staff directors
Develop a national training plan for rural development within the FS in coordination with other USDA agencies.	Team of WO coordinators, including P&CR, led by CF during FY 1990
Coordinate national rural development efforts within the FS related to Native Americans.	Continuously by Native American Coordinator in WO-S&PF
On an ongoing basis, distribute current national level information about rural development to the field.	Continuously by WO, led by CF and PAO
Participate in the management and expansion of USDA's Rural Information Center as a national rural development technical assistance center.	Continuously by WO-CF
Include rural development considerations in the agency's resources planning processes, incorporating appropriate language in long-term planning documents.	Continuously by WO staff coordinators led by RPA and LMP
Continue to use the Rural Development Steering Committee for internal coordination, monitoring and evaluation with the help of WO staff.	Continuously by Associate Deputy Chiefs led by S&PF

APPENDIX A

USDA'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT MISSION STATEMENT (Draft—3/14/90)

The mission is "to improve the employment opportunities, incomes and well-being of the Nation's rural people by strengthening the capacity of rural America to compete in the global economy."

Statement of Explanation

Rural America's resources—the people, the land, the natural wealth—are essential to national economic well-being. These resources must be used more effectively if the United States is to retain its ability to generate better incomes and standards of living. True development results from improvements in the ability of the rural economy to achieve growth in personal incomes that are sustainable over the long-term through local actions, with minimal subsidy.

Actions designed to promote immediate and perhaps short-term improvement in employment opportunities and income must be linked to longer-term, comprehensive strategies. Otherwise, it is unlikely that those actions will contribute to the desired level of sustainable economic activity. Additionally, the pace with which economic change occurs requires dynamic and flexible rural development policies and programs that are responsive to new conditions.

The central goal of the mission is to permanently strengthen the capacity of the rural economy to generate better incomes. A strengthened rural economy will enhance the competitiveness of the Nation within the global economy. The mission calls for USDA to invest in rural America's human, institutional, natural and physical assets. Wherever possible, USDA will establish partnerships with public and private entities in cooperative rural economic development efforts.

The Department of Agriculture's authority for assisting rural areas is codified in a long list of legislation that includes: the Rural Development Act of 1972; the Rural Development Policy Act of 1980; and the Food Security Act of 1985. Traditionally, USDA's rural development programs have focused on the provision of infrastructure, such as water and sewer facilities, electric and telephone utilities, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals and community buildings and facilities.

Future USDA strategies must balance investments in physical infrastructure with efforts to strengthen the capacity of rural people and governments to deal with change, create new jobs through business development and entrepreneurship, enhance the quality of the environment for rural people and businesses, and provide information about opportunities and alternative strategies. USDA's rural development mission focuses on enhancing the productive capacity of rural America over the long-term and not on the particular objectives of the individual programs.

USDA's network of agencies and history of working directly with rural people give it a unique presence in rural America. The range of USDA's clients extends throughout rural life and touches many aspects of the "rural community" including bankers, community leaders, educators, factory workers, farmers and small-business owners. USDA's statutory responsibility to coordinate rural development activities within the Federal government gives it the opportunity to provide leadership and assistance to public and private entities engaged in rural economic development activities.

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDATIONS OF USDA'S RURAL REVITALIZATION TASK FORCE TO THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE *

Clarify USDA's Commitment to Rural Development

- Affirm USDA responsibility for rural economic development
- Adopt a clear mission statement
- Distribute report and publicize mission statement

Strengthen Coordination of Rural Programs

- Establish policy-level coordinating council on rural development
- Strengthen Food and Agriculture Councils

Enhance USDA's Capacity for Strategic Action

- Create a permanent staff
- Develop long-range planning process
- Provide leadership to State rural development efforts
- Link policy decisions with USDA mission
- Develop indicators for achieving goals
- Study successful economic development strategies
- Study program targeting criteria and implement USDA targeting goals
- Evaluate USDA rural programs

Improve USDA's Ability to Implement Rural Programs

- Review USDA job requirements and improve rural development training
- Produce rural development newsletter and improve the circulation of USDA research information
- Strengthen the Rural Information Center and encourage its use as a USDA resource
- Produce orientation programs for USDA's rural development mission
- Encourage stronger land grant university role in rural economic development

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* From "A Hard Look at USDA's Rural Development Programs" (June 30, 1989)

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APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF "RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR THE 90's: A PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE" *

Rural Development Perspective—Key Points

1) Recognize that rural America today needs help.
2) Federal rural development efforts must look beyond agriculture.
3) Rural development is, at the heart, an economic issue.
4) Economic stresses currently affecting most rural areas are primarily non-agricultural in nature—and global in scope.
5) Rapid change in rural America calls for tighter coordination of Federal rural development programs.
6) Local community leadership is the key to successful rural development programs.

Recommendations for Change—Objectives

- Improve coordination of all Federal, State and local government rural development efforts.
- Improve the support and training of local community leaders in the development process.
- Improve the education and job skills training of rural people.
- Assist rural communities in providing the necessary infrastructure for expanding local business enterprises as well as attracting new economic activity.

Plan of Action

1) Announce Presidential Initiative on Rural America, spot-lighting the formation of the President's Council on Rural America.

2) Announce a Presidential Rural Development Demonstration Program, setting up a coordinated series of regional rural development demonstration projects.

3) Establish a structure to coordinate government rural development efforts:
   - At the national level through a Presidential Council on Rural America
   - By making the Cabinet-level Working Group on Rural Development a permanent standing committee
   - At the State level, form State Rural Development Councils.

4) Target and redirect resources: The President will outline a carefully planned commitment to more effectively target Federal rural development efforts.

5) Establish a rural development technical assistance center and hot line. This could be developed as a logical extension of the Rural Information Center already initiated by USDA, with all relevant Federal agencies participating.

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* Announced on January 22, 1990

APPENDIX D

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS RESOLUTION ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT *

Whereas: the social and economic complexion of rural America is changing much faster today and those changes are having greater impact on the lives and well being of the Nation's rural residents; and

Whereas: the economic recovery of rural America lags behind the Nation as a whole; and

Whereas: the Congress of the United States, USDA, and other Federal departments and agencies are moving ahead to develop policies, programs, and initiatives that meet the real needs of the Nation's rural people; and

Whereas: the public and policy-makers need a better understanding of the role of forestry and forest resources in rural development aspects such as economic development, quality of life, and protecting and enhancing the natural resource base;

Now therefore, be it resolved that NASF supports the rural development initiatives of the Congress and USDA that expand the contribution of forest resources to jobs, income, and revenues in local communities in ways that maintain and protect the environment and natural resources of rural areas. The objectives of such an initiative and the role for NASF should be:

1. to strengthen working relationships and partnerships with the National Association of Conservation Districts and others who are actively involved in rural development;

2. to work with rural community public decisionmakers to inform them about the values of forestry and forest resources in rural development initiatives;

3. to promote rural economic development programs that assist local communities and landowners in establishing rural value added enterprises that utilize forest resource commodities and non-commodity values such as outdoor recreation, wildlife, and tourism;

4. to advise local forest resource producers on the potential for niche markets (domestic and foreign) and trade expansion;

5. to develop forestry educational and information programs on international trade.

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* Approved on October 18, 1989

APPENDIX E

EXAMPLES OF FOREST SERVICE RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS

The Forest Service (FS) participates in a variety of rural development activities. The following examples show the range of agency involvement, and are grouped to demonstrate how current efforts might fit within different rural development strategies as defined by the Department (see Appendix A). Although the FS currently is involved, we must strengthen our contribution through more focused and coordinated efforts as recommended in this plan.

Invest in Physical Infrastructure

Helena National Forest employees are providing expertise on tree planting, equipment, supervision, and labor for improving the Helena airport.

The Rexford Ranger District on the Kootenai National Forest provides a helipad for medical emergencies in the remote area.

Several Forests and Regions have helped local and State officials prepare proposals for cost-sharing the construction of timber bridges and have hosted conferences on timber bridge technology.

In working with local communities, the National Forests in Alabama helped a rural volunteer fire department construct a building and helped fund the construction of a water line serving a rural community and a work center.

As chairperson of the Transportation Council of the local Chamber of Commerce, an employee at the Missoula Technology Development Center provided leadership to build and improve city streets, area highways, and commercial air service.

The Monongahela National Forest and a sportsmen's group built, through cost-sharing, a fishing pier on a local lake to improve access for the physically disabled and to increase tourism.

Through the Job Corps program, the Nicolet National Forest has built park facilities, museum buildings, and government administrative offices.

As part of a Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) effort, the FS helped build low-income housing for rural residents that included contributions by landowners, a sawmiller, and the high school carpentry class.

The Lassen National Forest and McDonald's Corporation are providing a summer camp with quarters for a medical staff at the historic Gallatin House to help children afflicted with cancer.

Strengthen the Capacity of Rural People and Governments to Deal with Change

As a member of a regional economic development council, an employee on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest contributed toward a variety of local accomplishments: provided international trade leads, established nursing education classes, and funded a city tourism project.

A Flathead National Forest employee was the catalyst behind the formation of a citizens' planning committee that developed a land use plan involving many private landowners and government agencies at all levels.

The Kootenai National Forest cooperates with the U.S. Border Patrol to monitor drug traffic on Lake Koocanusa, and is working with local officials to attract a developer to build a lodge on private land adjacent to the lake.

The National Forests of Alabama loaned Federal video equipment to the local chamber of commerce to produce a videotape promoting the area.

As part of the Pacific Northwest Strategy, Ranger Districts in Oregon and Washington are helping timber-dependent communities plan for their future development by expanding recreation, retooling mills for alternative wood products, attracting new business, and providing needed start-up funds.

Many FS employees participate in rural community literacy programs, tutoring adults in reading and writing.

The Sweet Home Ranger District on the Willamette National Forest, in conjunction with the local Council of Governments, formed the Linn Tourism Coalition to promote local recreational and cultural attractions.

Create Jobs Through Business Development and Entrepreneurship

The Southeastern Experiment Station worked with universities and other USDA agencies to assess income potential from public recreational use of leased private rural lands.

Working with the Arkansas Governor's Task Force for Dislocated Workers, Southern Research Station staff skilled in writing resumes helped workers develop needed job-search skills.

As a member of a RC&D area, the FS is helping rural citizens in Maine expand the Christmas wreath industry through funding, educational, and promotional activities.

The Cabinet Ranger District of the Kootenai National Forest has helped local communities develop annual celebrations such as the Montana Bass Derby and Huckleberry Festival to promote tourism and recreation.

Through a combined effort, a State Game and Fish Division, a county, and the FS constructed a 184-acre lake on National Forest lands to provide a fishery opportunity for a multi-county area.

The Green Mountain and White Mountain National Forests used FS research information in developing a policy allowing private individuals to tap maple trees on the National Forests.

Through a FS rural development specialist in the Southwestern Region, the FS is helping small communities develop a wood products cooperative, a revolving loan fund, and a recreation complex on private land.

Enhance the Quality of the Environment for Rural People and Businesses

Southern Research Station employees helped a community reforest an old, vacated community dump site.

District employees on the Nez Perce National Forest who are trained as emergency medical technicians receive administrative leave to respond to medical emergencies.

As an extension of the Rural Community Fire Protection Program, a Ranger District on the Beaverhead National Forest entered into a cooperative agreement to respond to emergencies including house fires.

The Superior National Forest and local resorts developed a partnership to provide information programs to resort patrons about the wilderness ethic.

A specialist in the North Central Forest Experiment Station helped form a group to establish a site for recycling motor oil.

Provide Information about Opportunities and Alternate Strategies

A research unit at the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station supplied a local bank with resource data for an area in western Pennsylvania so the bank could judge the merits of an industry loan application.

Working with other Federal and State agencies in Mississippi, Southern Region scientists helped small furniture manufacturers utilize their wood residues by determining the economics of using wood residues as a fuel for dry kilns.

The Forest Products Laboratory has developed a priority research program to focus future research on enhancing forest-based economies in rural America through diversification and increased competitiveness.

The Pacific Northwest Region helped organize a Special Forest Products Conference focusing on the use of forest resources such as mushrooms, berries, floral and landscape products, and medicinal plants.

A FS marketing specialist in the Northeastern Area developed a business plan for a ready-to-assemble furniture plant that can be used by any rural community with adequate transportation.

Through a RC&D effort, the FS is helping the State of Maine develop a cedar shingle project that includes inventorying producers, developing markets, and improving production.

The National Forests in Idaho are sponsoring youth camps and conferences, high school career days, and college career weeks geared toward furthering the education of Native Americans.

In the Northern Region, the FS is co-sponsoring the Montana Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation to identify opportunities for the State involving the public and private sectors.

A research social scientist at the Northeastern Forest Experiment Station is helping several rural communities in Vermont develop surveys to assess local recreation needs. When data are collected, summaries will be developed and given to the communities.

Through the cooperation of the FS, local grazing associations, State agencies, and other Federal agencies, a series of tours have been conducted on the Mark Twain National Forest to improve local awareness of sound grazing practices on rangeland as part of an overall effort to sustain rural economies through improved range management.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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